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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: promoting empowerment of people in achieving
poverty eradication, social integration and full employment
and decent work for all**

Statement submitted by Kham Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Poverty is a global phenomenon known to all peoples of the Earth, and has been the scourge of humankind through the ages. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides, in its article 25, that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

International organizations have defined poverty as the economic situation in which the individual lacks sufficient income to enjoy a basic level of health care, food, clothing, education and all the requirements necessary to secure a decent standard of life. This concept has been expanded to include the importance of the individual's access to a decent life, a healthy environment and opportunities for democratic participation in the decision-making aspects of civilian life.

One used to be considered poor if one's income was not enough to satisfy one's minimum food needs.

The number of least developed countries has increased from 25 in 1971 to 48 in 1999 to 86 today.

Causes of and factors in the spread of the phenomenon of poverty

Although there are objective reasons behind the phenomenon of poverty, hunger and the spread of diseases in poor and developing countries, many experts and scholars assert that rich countries are directly responsible for them and that, in a lot of areas, the ability to deal with these humanitarian disasters are still inadequate. Reasons for this include:

- Wars
- High external debt
- Neglect of economic reforms
- Administrative corruption
- Destruction of the agricultural sector of poor and developing countries
- Growing problem of desertification
- Weak development and insufficient humanitarian aid from rich countries
- Increased military spending

These factors are in addition to others, such as inflation, poor distribution of income and wealth, low levels of economic development and education and high rates of unemployment.

Effects of poverty

The social effects of poverty include the following:

- Negative individual behaviour and morals
- Fewer children in education, which leads to the spread of illiteracy
- The emergence of child labour and its negative effects on society and the economy

- The deterioration of health and care and an increase in mortality, especially among children

The economic effects of poverty include:

- The emergence and spread of corruption, which disables the economic interests of a country and can also be considered a cause of poverty
- The deterioration of living standards

Proposed solutions

We propose the following:

- Cooperation, coordination and effective joint action between the State and civil society organizations
- The development of legislative frameworks governing the work of civil society organizations
- An enhanced role of associations and social organizations in order to allow them to manage their own activities without interference and to practise their activities without threat

Concerted efforts of the international community

As long as poverty remains a global phenomenon and a problem experienced by the entire world, albeit on different scales, it will be incumbent on the international community to work with organizations to help find solutions to this problem.

The United Nations remains interested in the theme of poverty in the world and holds conferences in an attempt to eradicate extreme poverty. In spite of its frequent conferences, programmes, plans and decisions, the desired results remain elusive.

General summary

To eliminate poverty, there are a combination of factors that must be available, including significant growth in national production. The relationship between growth and poverty reduction is proportional. Providing poor people with access to better education, health care, food, housing, clothing and basic services such as clean drinking water, transportation, medical services and hospitalization all effectively contribute to the process of accelerating and increasing economic growth. Such growth must be accompanied by a more just distribution of income and wealth, the absence of which can cause unrest.

Growth in production contributes to and facilitates access to secure work for the young people that come onto the labour market each year, and provides work for the largest segment of people. Greater employment in turn leads to greater consumption, and can begin the process of raising the level of poor, low-income families that make up the majority of households in Arab societies. It should be clear that national economies are no longer disconnected from the global economy. Whenever companies lose productivity and national production loses competitiveness owing to low quality and high costs, there follows a decline in the labour market and in the ability of citizens to access food, treatment, education and security.

Conversely, when production improves, there are gains on other fronts, such as the ability of women to learn and secure decent work in order to become more effective in the community, and a decrease in corruption and bribery.